



## Vice Chancellor's Office

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**Date:** Sept. 16, 2021

**To:** NMSU Employees

**From:** Ruth A. Johnston, Vice Chancellor and Carol Parker, Provost

**Subject:** Updated mask guidance for faculty

This week, we received word from the NM Higher Education Department that the faculty exception to the indoor mask requirement could not continue. Effective immediately, instructors must remain masked while teaching. The state's latest [public health order](#) extends the indoor mask requirement for everyone, regardless of vaccination status, through at least mid-October. This is a change from the previous practice of allowing instructors who were fully vaccinated to remove their masks while teaching if they were able to maintain a six-foot distance from students.

As you know, due to the significant community spread of COVID-19 in many New Mexico counties, the NMSU system is now requiring *everyone*, vaccinated or not, to wear a mask indoors on all NMSU system campuses and offices around the state. This includes our Las Cruces, Doña Ana Community College, Alamogordo, Grants, and Carlsbad campuses, as well as New Mexico Department of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service offices and Agricultural Science Centers. This indoor mask requirement applies to all faculty, staff, students, vendors, and visitors to NMSU, regardless of vaccination status.

We are allowing one exception to this requirement for those who are fully vaccinated:

- 1.) Faculty and staff may remove their masks when in their own offices, alone, with the door closed.

Students will be expected to wear a mask at all times while indoors, regardless of vaccination status. Students will also be required to agree to the updated Crimson Commitment at the start of the semester, so this expectation should be clear to all students. A downloadable faculty guide to handling issues with mask-wearing in the classroom is available at [now.nmsu.edu/resources/signage-toolkits/COVID\\_Signage\\_FacultyGuide.pdf](https://now.nmsu.edu/resources/signage-toolkits/COVID_Signage_FacultyGuide.pdf)

Updated printable signs reflecting the new mask requirement can be found at [now.nmsu.edu/resources/signage.html](https://now.nmsu.edu/resources/signage.html) under "Signage for use inside university buildings" and should be printed by building monitors and displayed in multiple locations.

Questions about the mask requirement can be sent to [covid19@nmsu.edu](mailto:covid19@nmsu.edu).